

# Adding Up

A combination of space and style

BY SUSAN KLEINMAN • PHOTOGRAPHS BY DONALD STASENKA

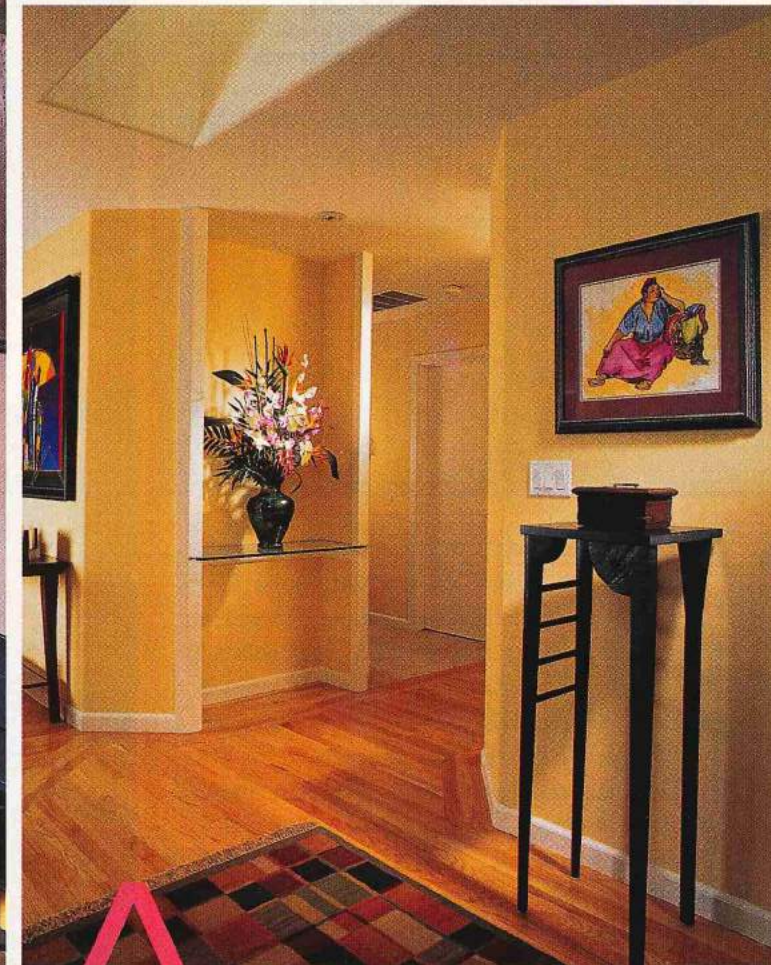


ABOVE: Although this living room is actually smaller than it was before the remodel, it is much more inviting. A dual-sided fireplace casts a warm glow and helps heat the room. Special niches and shelves feature three-dimensional artwork; the walls, too, are hung with favorite pieces. ABOVE RIGHT: Angled and curved walls add visual interest to what was once a cookie-cutter ranch-style house. Eleven skylights add natural light to the rooms and make the low ceilings feel higher.

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Before, the living room was large but seldom used.



**A**fter 20 years in the home construction business, George and Darlene Gayler know a thing or two about renovating houses. When they recently decided to renovate their undistinguished ranch house in Northern California, they put that knowledge to very good use. "We've had plenty of opportunity to see what works and what doesn't," says Darlene. One of the things the Gaylers see over and over is that few people like to use their living room, "even when they're decorated nicely," says George. "That's why most guests end up in the kitchen."

Deciding that they would work with that reality rather than fight it, the couple decided to shrink their living room





**ABOVE:** The original kitchen was cramped, outdated and closed off from the family room.  
**BELOW:** The rarely used family room space was completely remodeled and enlarged.



(the original was 14x19 feet; the room is now only 12x13) and to expand the one-story house and create a large kitchen/great room area in which they could cook, eat and entertain. They enlisted family friend Patsy Zakian-Greenough, a certified kitchen designer and interior designer in Haywood, California, to help them plan the space.

The four-month project resulted in a house that is 570 square feet bigger and reconfigured into a cozy space for the empty-nester couple when they're alone, yet it can still comfortably accommodate large gatherings.

### Reconfiguring the Space

In a radical departure from the straight lines and plain proportions of the original structure, George, who designed the renovation, added curved walls in both the living room and entry hall areas for architectural interest. He also added niches in the entry to showcase pieces from the couple's art collection. George also turned the space right across from the hall bathroom into a comfortable guest room adding sliding doors to a deck where visitors—including the Gaylers' grown children—can relax.

Expanded from a small bedroom, next to a guest room, the master suite is designed for comfort and

### What Was Done

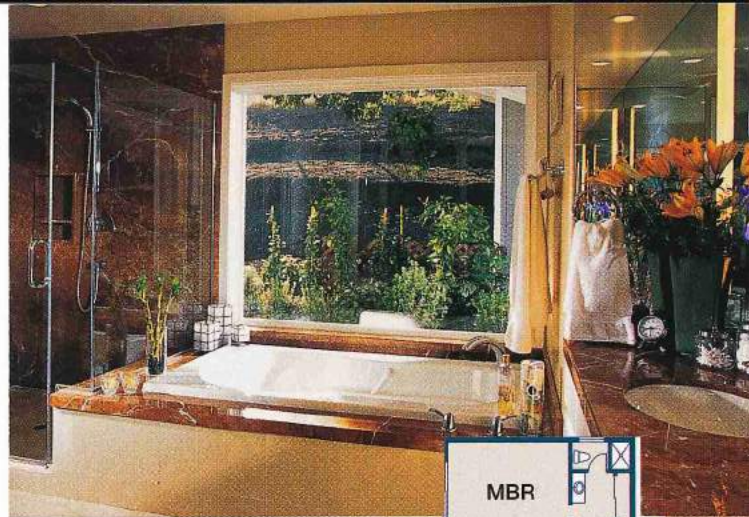
- Added 570 square feet of living space to the original floor plan, opening up the layout for better traffic flow and larger living spaces.
- Decreased the living room square footage; it is now used as a library/parlor.
- Shortened the hallway and angled the walls to add visual interest and eliminate the cramped corridor.
- Redesigned the kitchen and eating area into one large space.
- Added 11 skylights for light and two high-capacity fireplaces for heat.
- Enlarged and redesigned the master bedroom and bath with luxury additions.



Big enough to hold large gatherings, the great room was designed to create a cozy atmosphere.

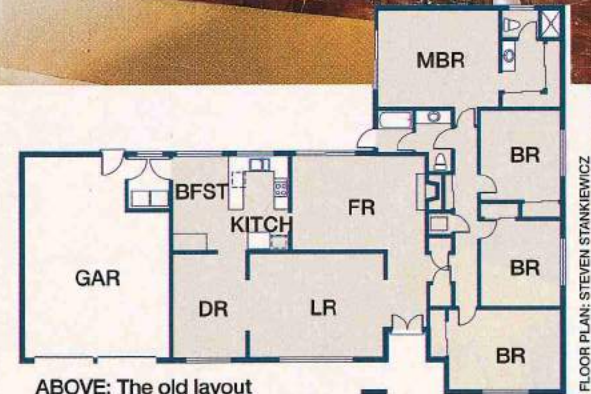
At 650 square feet, the kitchen/great room is now the hub of the house. Sliding glass doors and skylights bring the outdoors in, creating a sunny and comfortable area. A light, neutral color scheme visually enlarges the space. Accents of bright red add a touch of color to the room.





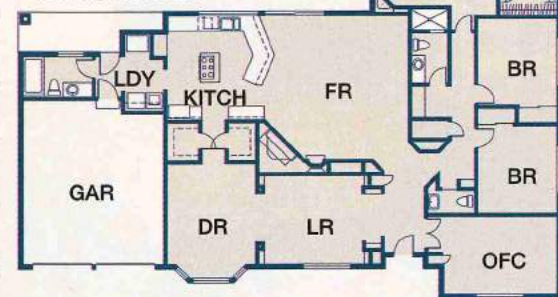
LEFT: Covered in mirrors and marble, the master bathroom is now a luxurious space. Over the whirlpool tub a large picture window was positioned to provide a view of lush foliage, which allows light in while retaining privacy.

BELOW: The new, larger master suite includes a cozy sitting area and fireplace as well as French doors that open to a patio. The attractive louvered shutters are adjustable.



ABOVE: The old layout included a rarely used living room, extra bedroom and a small kitchen.

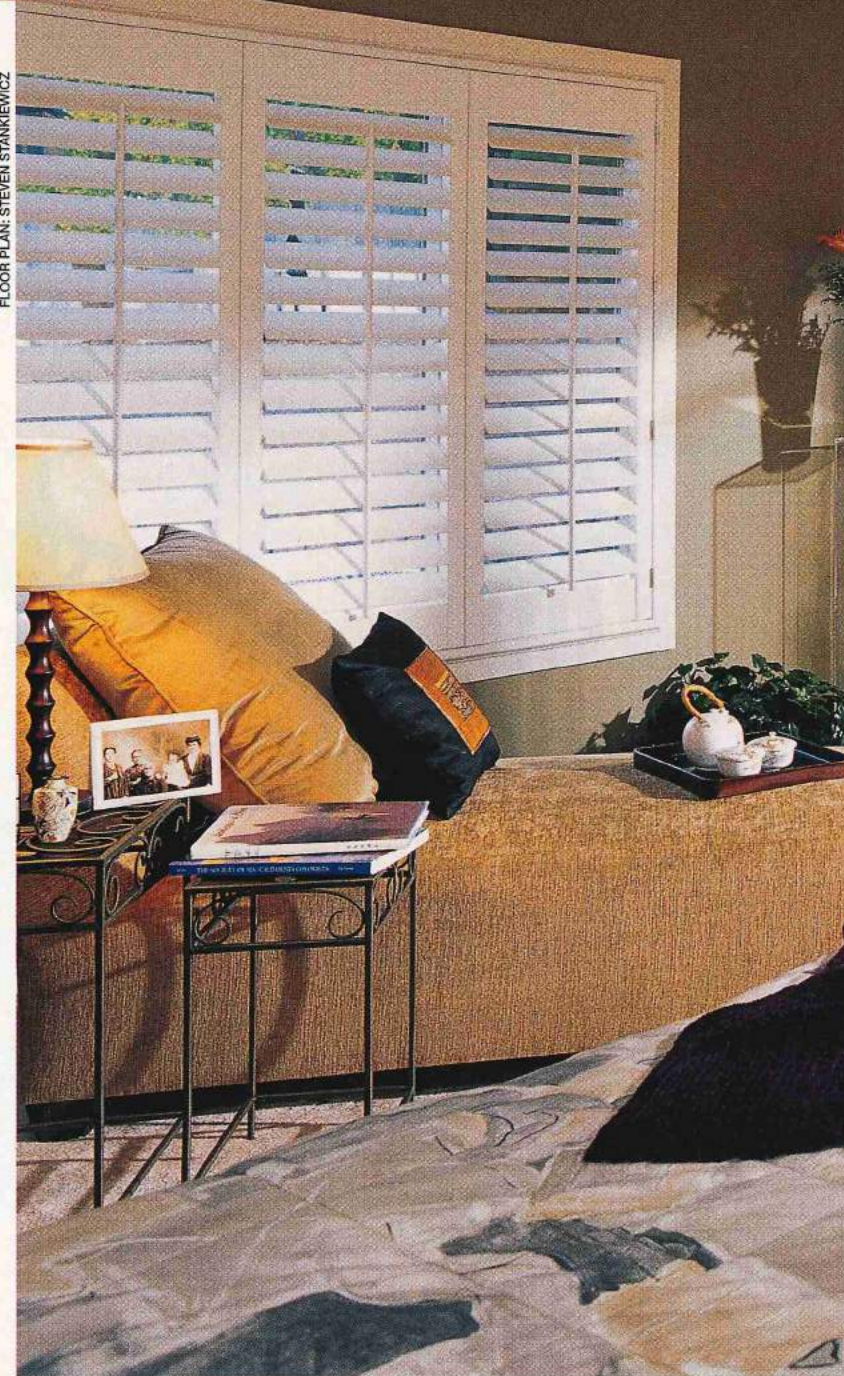
BELOW: Space was added to both the master suite and the family room/kitchen area. An extra bedroom was made into a guest suite.



privacy. It has a sitting area with fireplace and marble bathroom with a whirlpool bath. To keep the marble floor warm, they installed radiant heating.

The house is also energy efficient. Eleven thermal-pane, low-e skylights keep the place bright during daylight hours. And a direct-vent heating-and-cooling system, with zones throughout the house, allows rooms to be heated or cooled individually. A 35,000-Btu dual-sided gas fireplace between the family and living rooms also heats both rooms.

"The remodeled house isn't large, about twenty-seven hundred square feet," says George, "but it's inviting. When you walk through the door, you get the feeling, this is a place I really want to be." ■



"We love having company," says Darlene Gayler, "but we also love having the privacy of our master suite."

